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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 001416

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TAGS: [ETRD](#) [IZ](#) [KPAL](#) [PREL](#) [SY](#) [UP](#) [YI](#) [EI](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: PRE-GAERC DEMARCHE: IRELAND NEARING EU
BATTLEGROUPS DECISION

REF: A. STATE 208899

[1](#)B. DUBLIN 1360

Classified By: Political-Economic Counselor Mary E. Daly; Reasons 1.4 (B) and (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: On November 17, Post delivered ref A demarche to Jim Kelly, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) EU Correspondent, who underscored that Irish talking points had not changed substantively from Post's November 3 demarche (ref B). Kelly noted that defense-related discussions would focus on the GAERC's approval for a code of conduct on defense procurement. While the GAERC would not address the EU battlegroups proposal, Kelly observed that Ireland was preparing to decide by Christmas whether to participate in the initiative. He cited the EU's readiness to support the implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian Agreement on Movement and Access. He added that he was unaware, however, of any Irish movement on the possibility of contributing personnel for Palestinian police training. Regarding Bosnia, he expected that the GAERC would address the manner in which the role of High Representative might evolve after the expiry of Ashdown's term in February. Kelly also noted that the GAERC would not discuss Iraq, the Ukraine, or Syria in detail. End summary.

Defense Issues

[1](#)2. (C) The November 21-22 GAERC's defense-related discussions will focus on technical/pragmatic cooperation, principally the Ministers' approval for a code of conduct on defense procurement, said Kelly. He observed that Irish Defense Minister Willie O'Dea would attend and that the discussions would also feature a report from High Representative Solana on the EDA. Kelly pointed out that the GAERC would not address the EU battlegroups proposal, but he noted that the Irish Attorney General's office had recently forwarded opinions to the Minister O'Dea on the legislative changes necessary to enable Ireland to participate in the initiative. (Ireland espouses a "triple-lock" approach to overseas military deployments, whereby military action requires a UN mandate and authorization from both the Irish Parliament and GOI Administration.) Minister O'Dea is expected to discuss these legislative changes with the GOI Cabinet in early December, making possible a decision by Christmas on participation in the battlegroups.

Iraq

[1](#)3. (C) Discussion on Iraq will not be detailed, remarked Kelly. The GAERC conclusions, he added, would likely reaffirm the EU's support for reconstruction. Ministers will also offer preliminary opinions on the nature of EU engagement with the Iraqi Government to be established after the December elections.

MEPP

[1](#)4. (C) Kelly praised Secretary Rice's leadership in brokering the Israeli-Palestinian Agreement on Movement and Access, and he stated that the EU was ready to fulfill its role in implementing the agreement, including through financial contributions. Kelly pointed out that EU support for Gaza reconstruction would be a central discussion item at the GAERC meeting. He also said that he was unaware of any Irish movement on the possibility of contributing personnel for Palestinian police training. (Post has heard from Irish Department of Justice sources that Ireland has been considering this option.)

Ukraine

[1](#)5. (C) The Ukraine is not scheduled as a GAERC agenda item, said Kelly. He expected that Ministers would speak with Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner on the margins regarding preparatory points for the December 1 Ukraine-EU Summit. Kelly added that Ireland strongly supported U.S.-EU coordination with Ukraine on approaches to Belarus.

Bosnia

16. (C) Bosnia will be the marquis discussion item at the GAERC meeting, with Washington's 10th anniversary commemoration of the Dayton agreement likewise occurring on November 21-22, commented Kelly. Ministers will focus on approval for the Commission's decision to open Stabilization and Association Agreement negotiations with Bosnia and Hercegovina. The GAERC will also address the manner in which the role of High Representative might evolve after the expiry of Ashdown's term in February. Kelly did not expect that the GAERC would deliberate on a possible successor for High Representative Ashdown, and he noted that Ireland did not have a favored candidate. He added that the December GAERC would take up the succession question in more detail.

SYRIA

17. (C) Kelly stated that Syria would not be discussed in detail at the GAERC, though he underscored Irish support for full implementation of Syria-related UNSC resolutions. He mentioned that Ireland's Deputy Police Commissioner, Peter Fitzgerald, who led the initial UN fact-finding team on the Hariri assassination, was no longer involved in UN investigation efforts.

WTO

18. (C) As with ref B demarche, Kelly deferred to the Department of Agriculture and Food and the Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Employment for the official Irish position on the Doha negotiations. (As noted in earlier reporting, Ireland is among those Member States that are unwilling to consider further EU agricultural concessions ahead of the Hong Kong Ministerial.) Kelly ventured only that EU expectations for Hong Kong appeared to have been scaled back following WTO ministerial discussions in Geneva the week of November 7.

KENNY